

## Chapter 12: Training and Awareness



According to the McKinney-Vento Act, the local homeless liaison is responsible for:

- ensuring that school personnel identify homeless children and youth through coordination with other entities and agencies and [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(i)];
- ensuring that homeless students and their families receive educational services, including Head Start and other preschool programs, referrals to health care, mental health, and dental services, and other appropriate services [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(iii)];
- coordinating and collaborating with the State Coordinator for homeless education as well as community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(C)].

In order to successfully meet these responsibilities, all liaisons must provide information and resources to school district personnel and community partners. Awareness raising activities should be designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of personnel to the needs of homeless children and youth, their rights, and their specific educational needs [42 U.S.C. § 11433(d)(3)]. Districts that receive a McKinney-Vento subgrant may use those funds to provide professional development for educators and pupil services personnel.

### Section 12.1 Designing Professional Development Opportunities

Professional development enhances the skills and knowledge of individuals and is delivered through a variety of methods. It can include informal methods, such as sharing information in district meetings, or more formal learning, such as structured training and courses. Information that assists professionals with using the skills and abilities they already possess is considered basic professional development, while advanced professional development helps staff acquire new information and skills.

As liaisons create professional development opportunities that focus on the issue of homeless education for school district staff and community partners, it is important to keep in mind some important tenets of adult education. In general, adult learners

- are selective and self-directed,
- bring a wide variety of experiences to the educational setting,
- focus on practical solutions and applications of information,
- need an opportunity to participate or apply new information, and
- assimilate information more effectively when the learning process includes a discussion.

Keeping these tenets in mind, it is critical to consider the needs of the various members of the audience as liaisons provide professional development and related activities. For example, district administrators may be most concerned with academic measures for homeless students, while registrars may focus on enrollment requirements. Furthermore, community partners may need to know information about how to best work with school systems to meet both academic and other basic needs. Effective training and awareness activities meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness by meeting the continuing education needs of district staff and community stakeholders, regardless of their roles.

Appendix 12.A Presenter Tips has some additional hints for developing presentations. Appendix 12.B Common Signs of Homelessness can be used as a handout to increase the basic awareness of homeless students for audiences with less familiarity with the topic.

## **Section 12.2 Training Materials and Resources**

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) has several types of materials and resources available to help liaisons provide training and raise awareness in their school communities. These resources may be obtained by visiting the NCHE Training Resources webpage at:

[http://center.serve.org/ncche/web/s\\_p.php](http://center.serve.org/ncche/web/s_p.php).

### *Homeless Education Briefs*

NCHE homeless education issue briefs discuss selected issues pertaining to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and suggest strategies for implementation. In addition to being topic specific, many are also

tailored to particular audiences to maximize impact.

#### *Online Training Videos*

These videos give a brief introduction to key issues covered by the McKinney-Vento Act, and offer self-paced learning.

#### *Recorded NCHE webinars*

Another option for self-paced learning, pre-recorded webinars are updated regularly to ensure they provide comprehensive information related to different aspects of the law.

#### *Downloadable Presentations*

PowerPoint presentations designed by NCHE staff and partners are available for liaisons to download for use in their own local training sessions. The slides are customizable so that local data and contact information may be easily included.

In addition to these self-paced learning options, NCHE also offers free, monthly webinars. These webinars focus on various aspects related to implementing the McKinney-Vento Act and are open to any stakeholder in the education of students experiencing homelessness. The schedule of monthly offerings may be accessed online at <http://center.serve.org/nche/web/group.php>.

In addition to resources developed by NCHE, the website contains samples of training and related materials created by homeless education programs or agencies focusing on the needs of homeless families. Materials can be accessed by visiting [http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/aw\\_video.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/aw_video.php) or <http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/curric.php>. Additional materials are added as they become available, so liaisons should re-visit the webpages as they plan training opportunities each year.

Finally, liaisons can access a variety of materials for use in local training sessions by visiting the School Personnel Resources page of the Information by Topic section of the NCHE website at [http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/educ\\_schpers.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/educ_schpers.php).

## Section 12.3 Resources and Tools for Chapter Twelve

Appendix 12.A Presenter Tips

Appendix 12.B Common Signs of Homelessness